

united kingdom

THE PARALYSED
MAN

the Kingdom story from creation to revelation

THE PARALYSED MAN

Introduction

Jesus was travelling, teaching people about God's Kingdom and healing the sick. Vast crowds of people came to listen to Him and be healed.

Luke 5:17

One day while Jesus was *in a house* teaching *one of these large crowds*, some *religious leaders* were sitting nearby ... And *God's* healing power was strongly with Jesus.

Luke 5:18-21

Some men came carrying a paralysed man on a sleeping mat. They tried to take him inside to Jesus, but they couldn't reach Him because of the crowd. So they went up to the roof and took off some tiles. Then they lowered the sick man on his mat down into the crowd, right in front of Jesus. Seeing their *belief*, Jesus said to the man, "*Friend, all the things you've done to disobey God have been forgiven.*" But the *religious leaders* said to themselves, "Who does He think he is? *He's dishonouring God, because only God can forgive disobedience!*"

Luke 5:22-25

Jesus knew what they were thinking, so He asked them, "Why do you question this in your hearts? Is it easier to say 'Your *disobedience* is forgiven,' or *to say* 'Stand up and walk'? So I will prove to you that *the Promised King* has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralysed man and said, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!"

And immediately, as everyone watched, the man jumped up, picked up his mat, and went home praising God.

Matthew 9:8

Both fear and amazement swept through the crowd as they saw this happen. And they praised God for sending a man with such great authority.

TELLING THE STORY

Why this story?

Jesus has authority to heal sickness, but better yet, to forgive our disobedience (our sin). The religious leaders realise that Jesus has put Himself in the place of not only the Promised King, but of God Himself. They reject that proposition, just as Scripture said they would ...

A group of men are so desperate for their friend's physical healing and believe so much that Jesus can heal him that they destroy the roof of a house just to get to Jesus. What the paralysed man receives is more than expected – Jesus forgives everything he's done to disobey God! The religious leaders are furious; they know that Jesus is saying that He is God, because only God can forgive disobedience. But Jesus, knowing the deepest thoughts of their hearts, confirms that He is the Promised King and proves who He is by healing the paralysed man also. Everyone is amazed and frightened by His power and authority.

Key concepts to include in your story

- Jesus is travelling and teaching about God's Kingdom, and many people are coming to hear Him and to be healed.
- Jesus is teaching in a crowded house. Religious leaders come also to listen.
- God's healing power is with Jesus.
- Some men carry a paralysed man to Jesus, but cannot reach Him because He is in a crowded house. They make a hole in the roof of the house and lower the man in front of Jesus.
- The men believe that Jesus can heal their friend, and Jesus sees their belief and the man's belief.
- Jesus forgives the things the man has done to disobey God.
- The religious leaders think that Jesus is blaspheming against God because only God can forgive.
- Jesus knows what they are thinking and says He will prove that as Promised King He has authority to forgive disobedience.
- Jesus tells the man to get up and go. The man is healed and gets up, praising God. Everyone is afraid and amazed.
- The people praise God that Jesus has such authority.

Notes about how the story was crafted

Pharisees and teachers of the religious law has been replaced with **religious leaders**, a broader term that may be better understood by our audience.

Lord has been replaced by **God** so that our audience will understand who is being talked about.

Luke 5:20 uses the word for **man**, but several translations (NASB, NIV, NET) say **friend** or **young man** because the connotation is one of courtesy and good relationship. Even the Matthew account of this story uses **my child/son**, which was considered a friendly way to address someone. We have chosen to use **friend** in order to provide cohesion in the story set. Just as in the Abraham story, God calls people His **friend** when they believe in Him.

Jesus tells the man that His **sins are forgiven**. As in the other stories, we have replaced **sin** with the idea of disobeying God.

Blasphemy means to insult or dishonour God by trying to do something that only God had the authority to do. We have chosen to use **dishonouring God** in the example story, but you may say this in a way that seems the most natural for you.

Jesus calls Himself the **Son of Man** in this story, and we have replaced this title with **Promised King**. The title **Son of Man** is a messianic title that Jesus uses for Himself. The title **Son of Man** comes from Ezekiel's prophecy of the restoration of Israel to God's Kingdom and from Daniel 7:13-14, when God gives someone like the "son of man" eternal and universal rule over His Kingdom.

When Jesus calls Himself the **Son of Man**, He is claiming that He is the one who will take God's Kingdom. Therefore, the more familiar and understandable title **Promised King** is an appropriate one to use in the place of **Son of Man**.

We have included the conclusion of this story from Matthew 9:8 in order to highlight the authority that Jesus had and the fact that His authority was recognised by the people who saw His actions. The word for **fear** in Matthew 9:8 covers the range of feelings from fear to amazement, so we have unpacked the meaning of the word in the example story.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Retelling the story

- As your group practices retelling this story, help them see the different scenes in this story.
 - Introduction and setting
 - The men take their paralysed friend to Jesus and Jesus shocks the religious leaders by forgiving the man's disobedience
 - Jesus responds to the religious leaders by proving that He can forgive by healing the man of his paralysis
 - The man and all the people praised God that Jesus had such authority

Questions for discussion

You don't have to ask all of these questions in your discussion times. These questions are discussion starters, but you will find that often, once people feel comfortable, they talk about many of these things naturally. However, these questions are helpful to keep a conversation going where needed, and they provide a logical sequence of working through the story. Even if you don't ask all the questions in a group, try to ask people what this story means for them personally. You'll find that as you continue to interact with God's Word at a deep level, God's Spirit will reveal things for your life in a wonderful way!

- What do you like about this story?
- What bothered you about this story?
- What does this story show you about God?
- What does this story show you about people?
- What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
- How will you remember this story? (*Tell it!*)
- Is there anyone you would like to tell this story to? Or anyone you would like to practice with? E.g. Your children, your best friend, your wife, your husband, a mum at the school gate, your work colleague, your neighbour. (It's true that the best way to learn a story is to tell it. So why don't you give it a go and chat to each other next week about how you found it?)
- How does this story contribute to our understanding of the Gospel? How is this story part of the Gospel?

Questions people may have

This section can never be exhaustive. Remember that during your group discussion times, you want to focus on the above questions rather than get sidetracked by deeply academic issues. Part of the joy of experiencing and studying God's Word in this way is allowing God's Spirit to teach us and reveal His truth to us through the narrative of the individual stories, and ultimately through the narrative of the larger story line. However, we understand that sometimes people feel they need some deeper answers. Sometimes, the storyline has to speak for itself, and we have to trust it to do so. However, if your group needs some deeper answers in order to go on, here are some basics that you can discuss. If you have unresolved questions, please come and ask, and we'll help you find the answers.

- What is God's healing power?
 - Throughout Luke's writings, power is synonymous with God's Spirit. God's Spirit was with Jesus.
- How did the friends get the paralysed man to the top of the roof?
 - The average home in Capernaum, where this story took place, could probably hold fifty people standing. The largest home excavated in Capernaum is 18 feet wide. Homes had flat roofs with a staircase on the outside leading to the roof – made of branches laid over the roof beams and covered in mud. The roof was sturdy enough to walk on. It seems that Luke contextualised information for Theophilus, his audience, in Luke 5:19 when he said that the friend removed some tiles from the roof. Galilean homes would have had flat mud thatch roofs that would have been dug through, as Mark describes in Mark 2:4. However, Theophilus may have had a home with a flat tile roof, as was common in the Greek world. You can describe the friends' action as something like opening up the roof, or parting the thatch, so they could lower the mat. The original audience would have understood that the men climbed stairs that were on the outside of the house to reach the top. You may include this implicit information in your story if necessary. Although neither Gospel account (Luke or Mark) explicitly states that the men used ropes to lower the mat, you may include that information if it is necessary for audience comprehension.
- Jesus says that He sees **their belief**, and then He forgives the paralysed man of his sins. What about the friends?
 - The men believed that Jesus could heal their friend, and their belief was evidenced by the fact that they destroyed a roof to get to Jesus! The context suggests that the paralysed man believed for himself also. The story is not about the friends, so we do not know more about them. However, we know that their belief in Jesus certainly helped the paralysed man (who also believed) get to Jesus. Again we see that belief in Jesus is what healed the man both physically and spiritually.
- Is Jesus saying that healing sickness is harder to do than to forgive sin? Doesn't Jesus want to heal our physical problems too? Why did He start with forgiving the man's sins?
 - The question in Luke 5:23 is not one that is meant to be answered in terms of actually choosing which is more difficult, but it is meant to show that the two are the same. Most non-Western cultures do not differentiate between spiritual and physical healing; for them, physical healing often involves some sort of dealings with spiritual issues. Therefore, Jesus' pronouncement of forgiveness was the moment of healing. For Jesus, our spiritual health is the ultimate goal.
- How did healing the paralysed man prove that Jesus could forgive sins?
 - It seems easier to **say** that sins are forgiven because the legitimacy of that statement cannot be proven since the results cannot be seen. However, for Jesus' audience it would have been considered easier to do the action of healing – they believed that only God Himself could forgive sin. Some Jewish teachers of the time believed that someone performing miracles proved that he was a representative of God. The action of healing therefore might have served to prove to some Jesus' first declaration that He could forgive sins. However, neither act could be done in man's power alone – both acts required divine intervention.

THE PARALYSED MAN – for children

Introduction

Jesus was travelling, teaching people about God's Kingdom and healing the sick. Large crowds of people came to listen to Him and be healed.

Luke 5:17

One day while Jesus was in a house teaching one of these large crowds, some religious leaders were sitting nearby ... And God was giving Jesus the power to heal people.

Luke 5:18-21

Some men came carrying a ... man on a sleeping mat. The man couldn't move his body. They tried to take him inside to Jesus, but they couldn't reach Him because of the crowd. So they went up to the roof and took off some tiles. Then they lowered the sick man on his mat down into the crowd, right in front of Jesus. Seeing their belief in Him, Jesus said to the man, "Friend, all the things you've done to disobey God have been forgiven." But the religious leaders said to themselves, "Who does He think he is? He's speaking as if He were God, and only God can forgive disobedience!"

Luke 5:22-25

Jesus knew what they were thinking, so He asked them, "Why do you question these things? Is it easier to say 'Your disobedience is forgiven,' or to say 'Stand up and walk'? So I will prove to you that the Promised King has the power on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the man who couldn't move and said, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!"

And immediately, as everyone watched, the man jumped up, picked up his mat, and went home praising God.

Matthew 9:8

Both fear and surprise swept through the crowd as they saw this happen. And they praised God for sending a man with such great power.

TELLING THE STORY – for children

Key concepts to include in your story

The story will need to be simplified at varying levels based on the age group of the children you are teaching. This means that many of the details in the story will need to be summarized. However, you should include the following concepts in your story.

- Jesus is travelling and teaching about God's Kingdom, and many people are coming to hear Him and to be healed.
- Jesus is teaching in a crowded house. Religious leaders come also to listen.
- God's healing power is with Jesus.
- Some men carry a paralysed man to Jesus, but cannot reach Him because He is in a crowded house. They make a hole in the roof of the house and lower the man in front of Jesus.
- The men believe that Jesus can heal their friend, and Jesus sees their belief and the man's belief.
- Jesus forgives the things the man has done to disobey God.
- The religious leaders think that Jesus is blaspheming against God because only God can forgive.
- Jesus knows what they are thinking and says He will prove that as Promised King He has authority to forgive disobedience.
- Jesus tells the man to get up and go. The man is healed and gets up, praising God. Everyone is afraid and amazed.
- The people praise God that Jesus has such authority.

Example of a simplified version of the story for children

Jesus was travelling, teaching people about God's Kingdom and healing the sick. Large crowds of people came to listen to Him and be healed. One day while Jesus was teaching one of these crowds in a house, some religious leaders were sitting nearby. And God was giving Jesus the power to heal people. Some men arrived carrying a man on a mat, and the sick man couldn't move his body. His friends tried to carry him inside to Jesus, but they couldn't reach Him because of the crowd. So the man's friends carried him up to the roof and removed some of the tiles. Then they lowered the sick man on his mat down into the crowd – right in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw their belief in Him, he said to the sick man, "Friend, all the things you've done to disobey God have been forgiven." But when the religious leaders heard this, they thought, "Who does this man think He is? He's speaking as if He is God, but only God can forgive disobedience!" Jesus knew what the religious leaders were thinking. So He asked them, "Why do you question me? Is it easier to say, 'You are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and walk?' I will prove to you that the Promised King has the power on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the man who couldn't move and said, "Stand up, pick up your mat and go home!" And immediately, as everyone watched, the man jumped up, picked up his mat and went home praising God. The crowd was filled with fear and surprise as they saw this happen. And they praised God for sending a man with such great power.

Retelling the story

The following activities can be used to vary your storying sessions with the children and keep the action fresh and exciting. They also help the children learn the stories in different ways. You'll find as children journey through this story set with you, they become more and more capable of learning even complicated stories quickly and well. Varying activities and keeping it fun helps the children write the stories on their heart so that they can pull them out of their toolbox whenever a situation comes up where they can use them!

- **Charades** – Have participants choose one line from the story and use actions to convey that line to the rest of the group. The child that guesses correctly goes next.
- **Skit** – Assign parts to groups and have them act out the story as you or a participant narrates. This can be done as a group or in smaller teams. If done in teams, you may choose to have each team act out the whole story, or assign sections and have them perform the skits in chronological order one after the other.
- **Song** – This activity seems to work best in small groups of older and more advanced students. If you believe your group would enjoy this activity, have them write and perform a song based on a story or a portion of a story. To make this task easier, have each group choose a song melody as their foundation and change the lyrics as needed, as opposed to starting from scratch.
- **Sign Language** – This is a great way to incorporate kinaesthetic learning into storying. Work with the participants to develop "sign language" for keywords in the story. This will help them to remember the order and progression of the story. This activity may also be done as a group or in smaller teams. If done in teams, have a participant from each team narrate as the group demonstrates their motions. The more creative, the more likely they are to remember it! Sign language is a good activity if younger and more inexperienced storytellers are part of the group.
- **Perspective Shift** – This creative and critical thinking activity works best later in the story set. Assign groups of children different characters in the story. They then adjust the story they have learned to the perspective of that character. For example, they could tell the Fall story from Adam and Eve's perspectives or the Abraham story from Abraham's perspective.
- **Memory** – The storyteller starts this activity by saying the first line of the story. The story then moves around the circle as each participant tells a line. An alternate method is to go back and forth between partners as they tell the story to each other.
- **Popcorn** – The storyteller also starts this activity. As children remember, they raise their hand. When ready, the storyteller yells "pop" and the name of someone with their hand raised. That person will then jump in until more hands are raised and they shout "pop" to pass the story to another child. You will likely need to demonstrate how this works.
- **Interview** – Children are assigned different characters. A child designated as "interviewer" asks the characters questions about what happened in the story and the character answers according to his or her role. For example, the interviewer could ask Adam about what he witnessed or the actions he took in the garden when he ate the fruit, and Adam would give his answer.
- **Action words** – Before telling the story, the storyteller gives instructions associated with particular words. Children listen for those words in the story, and must do appropriate action when heard. For example, the storyteller would tell the participants to wiggle their arm like a snake anytime they hear the word "snake." There should be multiple words associated with actions in the story. This activity also works well with a younger audience.

Children's Teaching Materials

Sunday mornings will begin in the warehouse with a joint children's worship time led by a youth worship band followed by a storying session with the roving storyteller. Then groups will disperse to their usual meeting locations for the age-appropriate teaching of the story and activities that reinforce that story's message.

Sparks

10:30 Retell the story. Use a Storybook Bible.

Snack – rice cakes

10:45 Craft: Touch of Jesus

~ Use handprints (or draw around hands).

~ Decorate the paper with colours or stickers.

~ Place a pre-cut heart in the middle of the handprint.



11:15 Music:

~ "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"

~ "Paralysed Man" (Sing to the tune of "Here we go gathering nuts in May")

The friends had a man who couldn't walk, couldn't walk, couldn't walk

The friends had a man who couldn't walk; They needed Jesus

The lowered him down through the roof, through the roof, through the rook

They lowered him down through the roof; right to Jesus

Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven, sins are forgiven, sins are forgiven"

Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven; get up and walk"

11:20 Play

Resources Needed:

- Storybook Bible
- Rice cakes

- Paper
- Pre-cut hearts
- Stickers
- Pens or crayons

- Music

Little Flames

10:30 Begin with prayer. (Don't repeat a specific prayer, but follow the general idea of the prayer below.)

~ Say "Hi" to God, tell Him we're glad He's there with us and ask Him to help us see Him, hear Him and know Him. Invite Him into everything we'll be doing today.

Keep today's focus in mind: "Jesus wants to forgive me."

Resources Needed:

10:35 Retell the story together multiple times. Use an example "story stick" like the ones that the kids will create during their craft time. (The "story stick" design can be found on the last page of this document.)

~ The leader can tell the story first. Then allow children the opportunity to tell the story.



- Sample story stick (using strips of paper and split pins)

10:45 "Knowledge Harvest" conversation: (use similar questions as below)

- ~ What was Jesus teaching people?
- ~ Who came to listen to Jesus?
- ~ What did God give Jesus the power to do?
- ~ Why were some men carrying their friend on a mat?
- ~ How did the men get their friend to Jesus?
- ~ What did Jesus say to the man?
- ~ What were the religious leaders thinking?
- ~ What did Jesus say to the religious leaders?
- ~ What did Jesus say to the man who couldn't move?
- ~ What did the man do when Jesus told him to get up?
- ~ How did the crowd react to what Jesus had done?

10:50 Game: Relay race

- ~ Divide the children in two teams. Give each team a blanket and a doll (or teddy).
- ~ The children must work together to hold the blanket (without the doll/teddy falling off the blanket) and run to and around an obstacle (chair?) and back to their starting place.
- ~ The team that successfully finishes first is the winner. Play again.

- Blankets (one per team)
- Doll or teddy (one per team)
- Two chairs

10:55 Biscuit break – Use this relatively calm opportunity for a little chat and prayer time.
Discussion: "What are some types of things that Jesus can forgive you for?"

- Biscuits

11:00 Popcorn Prayer

- ~ Have simple prayers, popcorn style: "Thank you, Jesus, for _____!"

11:05 Craft: Story Sticks

- ~ Let each child make their own story stick using strips of paper and split pins.
(Optional: allow them to colour their story sticks.)
- ~ Let the children take turns sharing the story using their story stick. (See the last page of this lesson to learn how to fold the stick while sharing the story.)

- Strips of paper (pre-cut)
- Split pins
- Colours

11:15 Sing:

- ~ Sing songs used during the morning worship
- ~ "Paralysed Man" (Sing to the tune of "Here we go gathering nuts in May")
The friends had a man who couldn't walk, couldn't walk, couldn't walk
The friends had a man who couldn't walk; They needed Jesus
The lowered him down through the roof, through the roof, through the rook
They lowered him down through the roof; right to Jesus
Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven, sins are forgiven, sins are forgiven"
Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven; get up and walk"

- Music

- | | | |
|-------|--|---|
| 11:20 | Learn the words of the week: "Jesus wants to forgive me." Use visuals for the kids to help them learn the words. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visuals to help learn the phrase |
| 11:25 | <p>If there is any remaining time (or the previous activities finish early), allow the children to freely choose to do whatever they want to do. Play story-relevant music in the background. Leaders should engage with the children during this time: celebrate them, pray for them, love them.</p> <p>~ Play with story-oriented toys</p> <p>~ Role play</p> <p>~ Practice telling the story with their story sticks</p> <p>~ Colouring station</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story-oriented toys • Play-dough • Colouring sheets • Blank paper • Crayons • Story sticks |

Blaze

- | | | |
|-------|--|---|
| 10:35 | Welcome and straightforward telling of the story using a sample LARGE story stick (found on the last page of this lesson). | <p>Resources Needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample story stick |
|-------|--|---|



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|-------|---|--|
| 10:40 | <p>Allow the children to help retell the story using story sticks</p> <p>Discuss the questions:</p> <p>~ What do you like about this story?</p> <p>~ What bothered you about this story?</p> <p>~ What does this story show you about God?</p> <p>~ What does this story show you about people?</p> <p>~ What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?</p> <p>~ How will you remember this story? <i>Tell it!</i></p> <p>~ Who will you tell this story to?</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story sticks |
| 10:50 | <p>Game: "Obey Jesus"</p> <p>~ Bring a small toy or object. Let the children sit in a circle and pass the toy from person to person. The leader (or assigned child) closes his/her eyes, waits a few seconds (as the kids are passing the toy around) and then claps. Whoever is holding the toy when the leader claps must share one way to help a friend follow Jesus – like the paralysed man's friends helped him.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small toy or object |
| 11:00 | <p>Craft: Story Sticks</p> <p>~ Let each child make their own story stick using cardboard and split pins. Decorate them and put their names on them.</p> <p>~ Allow the children to try telling the story to a partner – using their story sticks.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strips of cardboard (pre-cut) • Split pins • Colours |
| 11:10 | <p>Game: Relay race</p> <p>~ Have a relay race between two teams. Using ½ cup of water on a towel-covered tray, each team must work together carrying the tray and lifting it over an obstacle without spilling any water.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trays • Towels • Cups of water |

11:25 Circle Time: praying, reflection, responses and offering

- Container for the offering

TNT

10:30 Welcome and straightforward telling of the story using a sample LARGE story stick (found on the last page of this lesson). Repeat ... telling the story a 2nd time.



THEME: We can believe that King Jesus can heal our friends, too.

10:40 Craft: Story Sticks

~ Allow each child to make their own story stick using fluorescent colours

Resources Needed:

- Sample story stick (LARGE)

- Fluorescent strips of paper (laminated and cut in strips)
- Split pins

10:45 Split into groups and practise retelling the story using the story sticks.

Discuss the questions:

~ What do you like about this story?

~ What bothered you about this story?

~ What does this story show you about God?

~ What does this story show you about people?

~ What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?

~ How will you remember this story? *Tell it!*

~ Who will you tell this story to?

Pray for who they want to share the story with

Encourage the children to use their story sticks to tell the story to others

11:05 Relay race:

~ Give each team a blanket to carry a similar item from start to finish without dropping the item. They need to work together carrying the blanket. Create obstacles the blanket must go over. If the item drops, the team must go back to start and try again.

~ Divide into groups of five. Each group gets one blanket. One child lays on the blanket, and the other four have to carry them (on the blanket) to a designated point where Jesus is. Then the "paralysed" child jumps up, picks up the blanket and jumps back to "home" saying, "Praise Jesus! I am healed!"

- Multiple blankets
- Random objects or stuffed animals

11:20 Treat:

~ Have the children cover a square biscuit with frosting and place a gingerbread man on top. Review the story. Then they can eat their snack.

- Biscuits
- Gingerbread men
- Frosting
- Plastic knives

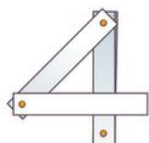
11:30 (As they leave) Activity pages

- Activity or colouring pages

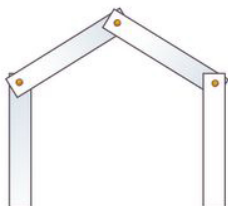
The 4 friends



There was a man who couldn't walk. He just lay on his mat all day.



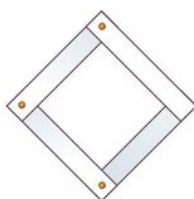
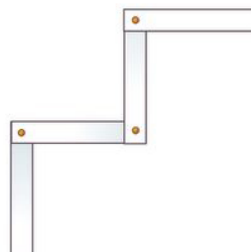
The man had 4 friends.
They wanted to help, so they took him to Jesus.



They got to the house
where Jesus was - but
it wasn't a house like
we have; it had a flat
roof.



So many people had come to see Jesus
that they couldn't get through the door.
So they climbed the stairs on to the roof...



... and made a hole in it.

They tied ropes to the mat,
and let it down through the roof
to Jesus.



When Jesus saw the man, he said, "Your sins are forgiven."
Some people were cross. "How can Jesus forgive sins?" they asked.
Jesus said, "Is it easier to say, your sins are forgiven, or...
...Get up, pick up your mat, and go home!"

And the man stood up straight,



folded up his mat,
and went home.